

Council on Postsecondary Education  
Quality and Accountability Policy Group  
May 22, 2006

## Continuing the Progress in Developmental Education

Kentucky shares with the nation a challenge to (a) reduce the number of traditional and non-traditional students coming to postsecondary education underprepared and (b) improve the success rates of underprepared students admitted to Kentucky institutions. These findings were recently evident in the November 2005 report, *Underprepared Students in Kentucky: A First Look at the 2001 Mandatory Placement Policy*. More than half of the first-time freshmen entering Kentucky institutions are underprepared in at least one subject. Furthermore, the first-year drop-out rate of underprepared students is twice the rate of academically prepared freshmen. The following efforts are underway to address these challenges.

### College Readiness

On May 18, the 2002 High School Feedback Reports were released. These reports provide college enrollment and performance information about the 2002 high school graduates. Reports are available for most high schools and provide comparison information for the district and the state. These reports were sent to principals and superintendents along with an extensive list of resources to assist in improving college readiness of high school graduates. School personnel and parents can access information about ACT-tested graduates who attended participating Kentucky postsecondary institutions. Average ACT scores, college grade point averages, first-year college retention rates, and mathematics and English developmental course placements and pass rates are reported.

The data refinements in the 2002 report and the lack of complete participation of all independent institutions make prior year comparisons difficult. However, the 2004 reports will be released later this fall and will provide more direct trend information to compare the graduating classes of 2002 and 2004.

This report underscores the usefulness of P-16 data exchanges to inform high schools about the impact of reform on high school graduate readiness and success in college. It also provides information that postsecondary educators can use when collaborating to improve teacher preparation programs and collaborations with local K-12 educators.

### Underprepared Student Success in College

The significantly higher dropout rate of underprepared students calls for greater attention from Kentucky's postsecondary educators. All campuses participated in the 2006 Kentucky Conference on Developmental Education and have provided outlines of immediate plans to improve services based on the conference sessions. The following excerpts reflect the diversity of steps for improvement.

#### Eastern Kentucky University

To improve developmental education, ECU discussed the need to address each of the following:

- Have an online version for the ECU developmental instructor faculty training by fall 2006, based on best practice models.
- Place developmental education coordinators for each of the content areas (reading, writing, and mathematics) by fall 2006. The coordinators would be faculty within the academic units.
- Work with academic departments and the university administration to support the developmental education program and faculty teaching developmental education courses.
- Support new full- and part-time developmental education faculty with faculty partners within the academic units and content areas.
- Include part-time faculty members in developmental education discussions and committees.
- Increase student participation in summer retention-based programs, such as the *First Step to College Success* program and other programs under consideration, the Mathematics and Science Academy, and a workforce to postsecondary program.
- Collaborate with the Office of Academic Advising and Retention to develop advisor training programs for student advisors with developmental education needs.
- Collaborate with Kentucky Adult Education to develop workforce to postsecondary initiatives and create additional support services for students in developmental education courses.
- Collaborate with the Office of Academic Testing to develop online developmental placement tests.
- Work with high schools in the service area to communicate college-level expectations for reading, writing, and mathematics, specifically the need to address rhetorical versus cognitive approaches to writing and the need for students entering the university to have a strong algebra background to enter college level mathematics courses.

#### Kentucky Community and Technical College System

- Facilitate collaboration among Career Pathways, Developmental Education, and Adult Education to improve the remediation component of each Career Pathway.
- Construct a specialized CP/DE advising model.
- Create a student success model appropriate to CP, including career exploration and planning and contextualized GE 101.
- Create multiple delivery methods and flexible scheduling for instruction.
- Create contextualized instructional materials for CP initiative.
- Seek budget resources for implementing and sustaining CP initiatives.
- Create and/or link appropriate college support services.

- Create a repository for KCTCS CP/DE materials.
- Create a CP/DE model for other programs/pathways.
- Flag these students as “CP” from the beginning for data collection.
- Post on the system Web site a graphic model to show that the DE component of a CP does not stop with completion of the highest level DE course.
- Ensure accurate placement of students.

#### Kentucky State University

- The first step will be to advocate for better coordination of developmental courses, programs, and services available. The team recommended the establishment of an advisory council on developmental education. The group should be broad-based and inclusive of instructional and academic support areas as well as counseling units.

#### Morehead State University

The following summary identifies initiatives and next steps which are being planned to increase successful completion of those courses and appropriate assessments to measure effectiveness of the initiatives:

##### *Administrative Model:*

- Students who are admitted with developmental needs are assigned to departments for academic advising if they have declared a major and to Academic and Career Services if undeclared. The ACS office also is responsible for tracking, monitoring of developmental course drops, and outcomes reporting. Communication between the departments and ACS is often limited.
- Beginning with fall 2006, each department will be asked to identify a specific faculty member who will serve as liaison to the Developmental Education Task Force and work closely with ACS in monitoring and tracking developmental course completion.

##### *Enrichment Academy:*

- In summer 2006, MoSU is planning to sponsor a five-week enrichment academy modeled after the ECU First Step to College Success program. Developmental students with two or more needs will earn credit for two developmental classes and an academic success class which integrates orientation, study skills, and career planning.

##### *UAR 128.01 Enforcement:*

- University Academic Regulation 128.01 requires that students complete developmental needs by the time they have attempted 45 credit hours. Failure to meet the requirement results in a student not being able to register for any other classes except developmental courses. Enforcement of the policy will be reevaluated in summer 2006.

##### *Developmental Student Advisement:*

- Students who declare a major are currently moved into a department even if they have three or more developmental course needs. A policy which prohibits declaration of a major until developmental needs are met will be revisited in summer 2006. At least one department (nursing) is currently developing a similar policy for students interested in their programs.

### Murray State University

- Improve communications about the community college program and developmental classes:
  - Communicate with administrators, teachers, and counselors in local high schools, campus support programs, and adult education programs.
  - Speak up and advocate for developmental students explaining their needs and noting their potential.
  - Increase awareness of current support courses and tutoring.
  - Extend tutoring hours.
- Work toward an understanding and proper attitude about assessment testing and course placement:
  - Talk with orientation leaders about appropriate enrollment which can lead to greater student success.
  - Provide a less intimidating and more personable atmosphere for students taking assessment tests during orientation sessions.
  - Meet with parents at orientations while students are testing to offer an understanding of the importance of correct placement for their students.
  - Improve the language used to describe developmental coursework, both verbal and written.
  - Track students who have tested into entry-level classes to develop a better placement test for MuSU classes.
- Expand advising/counseling using the community college advisor and staff to talk with students in all community college courses (not just restricted-status block classes) as soon as signs of difficulty arise.
- Train and seek to motivate all staff, including adjuncts, graduate assistants, and tutors, to respect, properly guide, and motivate developmental students.
- Strongly encourage individual student conferences with students in all developmental courses.

### Northern Kentucky University

- Use modular developmental mathematics classes (improve persistence).
- Offer study tables with faculty tutors available.
- Offer special incentives (contracts) for students who are repeating developmental classes.
- Develop a special developmental program for students who have two academic deficiencies.

- Front-load remediation in a summer bridge program and make reducing developmental needs a condition for admission to the university.
- Require every student admitted with a mathematics, reading, or writing deficiency to participate in an academic assistance program.
- Restructure the developmental reading class to emphasize skills needed for academic reading.
- Explore requiring completion of a developmental reading class as a prerequisite for ENG 101 for any student with a low ACT reading score.
- Explore offering reading courses to high school students that would prepare them for college-level reading expectations.

### University of Kentucky

- Conduct exploratory analyses of data captured in the Mandatory Placement Report to develop a better understanding of students requiring developmental help. UK has submitted follow-up data on students enrolled in developmental and college-level courses as part of the Student Feedback File submitted annually to the Council's comprehensive database. However, a demographic analysis of students who score below the statewide placement standards would improve UK's ability to assist certain segments of the freshman cohort in bringing their skills and knowledge up to statewide placement standards.
- Develop more effective assessment instruments for placing students into courses. UK recently conducted an analysis of a new test designed to place students into mathematics courses. Preliminary data suggest that the exam does not perform any better than the ACT mathematics sub-scale in predicting final grades in college-level mathematics. UK will explore options for improving the placement of students in mathematics and other courses.
- Examine the feasibility of remediating some students during one of the summer sessions. UK will explore the possibility of offering instruction to a limited number of students who fall below statewide placement standards in the summer. Students enrolled in this developmental program also will participate in UK 101, a course that provides an orientation to the university, support services, and campus life.

### University of Louisville

- In 1998, UofL operated a unit (Transitional Studies) with the primary purpose to provide developmental classes and related services to students who are admitted conditionally to the university. In most cases, these students had not completed the pre-college curriculum with satisfactory grades, had not scored sufficiently high on the ACT, or did not have the required high school GPA to be admitted to UofL. The decision to begin to increase minimum admission criteria and to admit students directly into their college of choice resulted in changing the way the university dealt with students with developmental needs.
- In 2000, the university contracted with Jefferson Community and Technical College to provide developmental classes on UofL's campus for students who needed developmental coursework in mathematics, English, and reading. Students who did not score above certain

minima on their ACT subscores were tested with COMPASS and placed into developmental courses on the basis of the COMPASS scores.

- In subsequent years the university began to mainstream all students into English 101 classes. This was accomplished by increasing the number of instructors, which enabled the English department to limit the class size to 22 and, thereby, provide more one-on-one help to students. UofL also phased out the developmental reading/reading comprehension courses by coupling reading assistance to specific general education courses that required a significant amount of reading as part of the normal course. In this way, the reading assistance helped improve students' reading abilities as well as providing better comprehension of the course material. Both of these strategies have provided good results and have permitted students to move directly into credit-bearing classes. All developmental courses in English and reading/reading comprehension have been eliminated.
- Mathematics remediation has proven to be a larger and more difficult task to address. UofL continues to offer developmental mathematics taught by JCTC instructors for students whose ACT mathematics scores fall below a threshold value. In addition, UofL offers special enhanced mathematics classes for students whose mathematics ACT score is slightly below the threshold value for credit-bearing classes. These supplemental classes meet four or five days (compared to the normal three or four) per week and require the students to sign a contract limiting their absences. These classes have proven to be remarkably successful in terms of both performance and retention. UofL also is beginning to experiment with one-hour mathematics modules that might replace the three- or four- hour developmental courses. These modules will target specific areas of weakness (e.g., trigonometry) rather than require a student to spend a full semester in a developmental class.

### Western Kentucky University

At the time of printing, Western Kentucky University had not submitted plans to improve services to underprepared students.

### Postsecondary Developmental Student Success Task Force

The Quality and Accountability Policy Group has requested that a task force be appointed to review issues related to developmental education and to improve developmental student success in college. Recognizing that Kentucky's high school and adult education curriculum reforms and college readiness assessments are effectively being addressed, this task force will be directed to focus on the postsecondary student experience. The following charge is proposed to guide the work of the task force:

The Postsecondary Developmental Student Success Task Force is charged with constructing a comprehensive plan for improving the outcomes of developmental education with accountability measures, goals, and timelines for improvement to be reviewed by the Council for implementation in 2007. To the extent possible, standards

for institutional and state level services and outcomes for underprepared students should be identified based on national developmental education research.

Members will be announced at the July Council meeting and will include representatives from institutional academic affairs, developmental education, and assessment areas. The task force will be asked to deliver its findings at the end of 2006 in support of the release of the review of Mandatory Placement Policy outcomes for the first-year students of 2004.

Staff preparation by Sherri Noxel